



TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM

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TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT December 15, 2014

Town Administrator's reports are available on-line at <http://www.ashburnham-ma.gov>

TOWN COMMITTEES

Currently there are openings on the following (1) Conservation Commission, (1) Council on Aging Board, (1) Parks and Recreation, (2) Historical Commission, and (2) Zoning Board of Appeals. These are listed on the Town's website under Volunteer Opportunities.

FY 15 BUDGET

At the boards last meeting it was voted to use a single tax rate. Many communities 23.5% use a split rate that is as high as \$36.50 for business and industrial to lower the residential rate. Ashburnham with its small commercial base would see a minimal change by doing so. The FY 15 Tax rate has been certified at \$22.28. This is a \$2.45 increase or 12.39% over FY 14. As projected \$2.26 or 92.4% of the increase is due to the loan payment for the Briggs school. In FY 15 the loan for the Oakmont track will be retired. Department's budgets for FY 16 are due to my office on December 15th, Department Heads will also be reviewing capital requests for FY 16. Also, I will be putting together the anticipated revenues for FY 16.

CABLE CONTRACT

We are in the final stages of negotiations with Comcast and will be meeting again this week.

FIRE UNION

Negotiations will continue on the 18th of this month.

INSURANCE

It has been determined that the town will stay with its current coverage options in January resulting in a 10.8% increase in costs. The plan options are the same except for affordable health care mandated changes that were made that accounts for about 3.3% of the increase.

GAS LINE

Kinder Morgan has filed for an alternate pipeline route through New Hampshire and it appears that Ashburnham property owners will not be affected. The proposed route will take advantage of some of the utility right of ways that currently exist.

DPW

Paul Aho, foreman of the Municipal Grounds Department has submitted his resignation. He will be relocating to Maine to pursue an alternative career. I want to thank him for his service to the town, he will be missed.

COA

We have been approached by Westminster to look at the option of joining with them in their newly constructed COA center. Several meetings have been held and a questionnaire will be sent out to the seniors of Ashburnham to determine interest and programming desires. This new center would expand hours from four days to five days a week and enhance a broad variety of programming and activities.

CDBG

MRPC due to funding issues has laid off several employees this past month. I was contacted by Glenn Eaton Executive Director to see if the town is interested in submitting a grant application this year. He would actually be working with us. I was also contacted by Kevin Flynn who would like to work with us also as a private contractor. In the past we have not been very successful with this grant program, but because it was free we proceeded. They now will be fee based which we will have to decide as to what project would warrant the cost.

2013 TOWN REPORT

For the **third** year in a row the Ashburnham Town Report has been recognized with the 2nd place award in Category 2 (population 5,000 – 12,499). Sylvia Turcotte continues to do an exceptional job on a historical document that encapsulates our activities each and every year. Great job well done! Our plaque will be presented at the MMA conference in January.

GREEN COMMUNITY

On December 3rd, Mike Rivers and I went to Boston to the State House where Ashburnham was designated as a Green Community and was the recipient of a grant in the amount of \$150,825. The Energy Committee met on Wednesday, December 10th to begin the discussion as to how best to apply these funds. The Committee determined that they would start with an energy audit on the Town Hall, Municipal Light, Public Safety and Library buildings.